

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Sacramento
January, 1965

Honorable Hugh M. Burns, President Pro Tem of the Senate

Honorable Jesse M. Unruh, Speaker of the Assembly

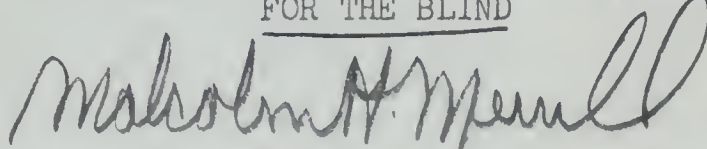
Pursuant to Division 5, Part 1, Chapter 2, Article 1.3, Section 3211 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the Coordinating Council on State Programs for the Blind herewith submits to the Legislature its thirteenth annual report covering the period from January 1, 1964 to December 31, 1964.

We believe the work of the Council has furthered the principle contained in the statute creating the Council; namely, provide for the coordination of the functions and programs of the various state departments insofar as such functions and programs affect the blind.

We trust this report will be of assistance to the Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

COORDINATING COUNCIL ON STATE PROGRAMS
FOR THE BLIND



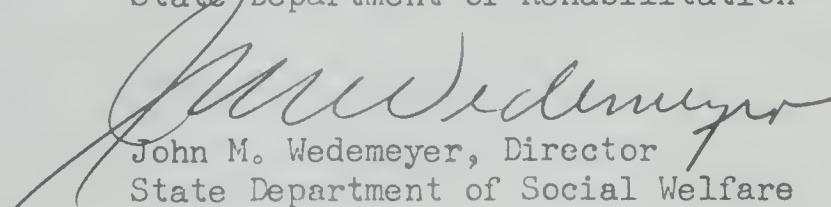
Malcolm H. Merrill, M.D., Director
State Department of Public Health



Max Rafferty, Director
State Department of Education



Warren Thompson, Director
State Department of Rehabilitation



John M. Wedemeyer, Director
State Department of Social Welfare

MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

During the twelve-month period covered by this report, January 1, 1964 to December 31, 1964, the Council members were:

Malcolm H. Merrill, M.D., Director, State Department of Public Health
Max Rafferty, Director, State Department of Education
Warren Thompson, Director, State Department of Rehabilitation of the Blind
John M. Wedemeyer, Director, State Department of Social Welfare

The Council met four times during the year to further the coordination of State programs for the blind. The chairmanship rotated among its members, and as in previous years the Coordinating Committee on State Services for the Blind served as a working committee, reporting to the Council at these quarterly meetings. The committee membership was as follows:

Department of Education

Francis W. Doyle, Deputy Superintendent; Chief, Division of Special Schools and Services
Berthold Lowenfeld, Superintendent, California School for the Blind (until retirement)
Everett Wilcox, Superintendent, California School for the Blind
Dorothy L. Misbach, Consultant in Education of the Visually Handicapped
S.W. Patterson, Assistant Chief, Division of Special School and Services
Virginia S. Simpson, Blind Section Librarian
Charles W. Watson, Chief, Bureau of Special Education

Department of Public Health

William D. Simmons, Supervisor, Prevention of Blindness Program

Department of Rehabilitation

Ellen Brennan, Supervising Home Teacher-Counselor of the Adult Blind
Allen G. Jenkins, Administrator, Orientation Center for the Blind
David R. Mendelson, Chief, Division of Rehabilitation of the Blind
Anthony E. Septinelli, Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Department of Social Welfare

Lillian McClure, Assistant to the Chief, Division for the Blind (until retirement)
William Groesbeck, Assistant to the Chief, Division for the Blind
Perry Sundquist, Chief, Division for the Blind

MAJOR ITEMS CONSIDERED BY COORDINATING COUNCIL

I. Blind Children with Additional Handicaps

The 1963 Report of the Coordinating Council on State Programs for the Blind directed attention to the visually handicapped having secondary handicaps. The situation is little changed from last year except these children are now a year older. The Coordinating Council on State Programs for the Blind takes this opportunity to direct the attention of the Legislature to the continued urgent need for a thorough survey of the extent and nature of the problems of blind and partially-seeing children with additional handicaps, to the need for pilot projects to establish ways of ministering to them, and to the need for financing an adequate service to these children. Without opportunity for rehabilitation many become welfare recipients or otherwise become dependent on society.

The number of visually handicapped children with secondary handicaps is not precisely known. A survey, subjective in nature, was made of all schools in California in 1963. It revealed there were 1,845 visually handicapped minors with other secondary handicapping conditions known to school principals. Of this number, 354 were so handicapped as not to be in school. Of the 1,491 enrolled in school, approximately a fourth, or 375, had marked secondary handicaps. Combining these two groups, namely 354 and 375, there are about 729 visually handicapped children with secondary handicaps needing special education and other provisions.

Such provisions include: (1) centers for the diagnosis and appraisal of the problems and potentials of such children, (2) extension of child care centers for the physically handicapped and the mentally retarded, (3) provisions for reimbursing school districts and county superintendents of schools for the additional excess expenses entailed in providing special education for visually handicapped pupils having secondary handicaps, (4) provisions for residential schooling for visually handicapped pupils with secondary handicaps for whom needed schooling cannot be provided by a school district or a county superintendent of schools, and (5) provisions for special schooling in private, non-sectarian schools through payment to parents or guardians or covering tuition costs for visually handicapped minors with secondary handicaps when the needed special education is not available through school district, county superintendent of schools, or a state residential school provided by the State.

The estimates above do not include at least two known groups: the preschool children, and those in institutions. These are particularly important groups because of the lack of help for them and the present inability to determine their potential. Following up on Legislative interest in multi-handicapped children a somewhat more inclusive survey of their numbers, location and problems has been undertaken and preliminary reports will soon be ready.

II. The Need for Information on Blindness and Blind Persons

In spite of periodic efforts to obtain information on blindness in the United States surprisingly little is known about this cause of handicap. Enumeration of blind persons was tried very early in the history of the census and various surveys have been undertaken periodically since then. Yet there remain important limitations of data on the number of blind persons, the number who become blind each year, the causes of blindness, and degree of vision, and the characteristics of the blind population. California has no continuing mechanism for getting information on blindness. Lack of information has had consequences for planning programs and services for the blind: for example, the epidemic of retrolental fibroplasia in the 1950's developed in the absence of any means for accumulating reports of this condition which blinded some 700 babies who now have entered schools and require increased special services; extraordinary efforts were needed to estimate how many individuals with vision impairment might be eligible and benefitted by cataract surgery under welfare provisions in order to plan the budgets for this.

The Council has considered the matter of blindness reporting and the maintenance of a register for the purposes of making better information available on blindness and the needs of blind persons, and to make possible research into the causes and prevention of blindness. The staff committee has been directed to fully study the values, problems, and operation of the various schemes for reporting and to report during the coming year with recommendations. The Coordinating Council on State Programs for the Blind urges wide interest in the question of blindness reporting in order that the most useful course of action can be taken.

REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS

I. Education Programs for the Visually Handicapped

A. Field Services for Blind Preschool Children and Their Parents in Southern California

Two visiting teachers provide the Field Service for Blind Preschool Children located south of the Tehachapi Mountains. On January 1, 1964, 99 children were served by the two visiting teachers, and on December 31, 1964, a total of 101 were receiving services with 41 new admissions balancing 39 closed cases during the year.

Central and Northern California is served by a private agency, the Variety Club Blind Babies Foundation, which supports four field workers.

In both areas, more attention is directed to casefinding and to making arrangements for those children who are unable to be enrolled in their local educational programs or at the residential school. There appears to be an increase in the number of blind children who are hard of hearing or who have communication problems.

B. California School for the Blind

The California School for the Blind offers an educational opportunity to blind children of California when there are no local educational services available to them. The course of study provides education from kindergarten through high school.

On January 1, 1964, 159 pupils were enrolled, with an enrollment in June 1964 of 160. Of the 29 students who left school at the end of the 1963-64 school year, 3 graduated from public high school, 19 transferred to public school programs for visually handicapped children in their home communities, 5 finished their education, and 2 moved out of state. On September 1964, 131 students returned to school, and there were 28 new admissions. Between September 1964 and January 1, 1965, 5 students were admitted, resulting in an enrollment of 164.

The 13 students attending high school are enrolled at Oakland Technical High School in a cooperative arrangement designed to assist the students in gradually adjusting to working, associating and competing with their seeing peers.

The school faculty has 20 teachers who supervise classes which range in size from 7 to 15 pupils. In addition to the academic department, 3 teachers are assigned to music instruction, 2 teachers are assigned to crafts and homemaking courses, and 2 instructors supervise the students required to take physical education each day with the exception of those excused by the school physician. Emphasis upon the development of independent travel skills by blind students requires the attention of one instructor.

Approximately one-third of the visually impaired children have handicapping conditions other than visual loss. Through experience and preparation the staff at the school is developing the skill to determine the full range of abilities of blind children even though retardation may be at first indicated. Besides the deaf-blind youngsters, two classes have been established to meet the need of those children who cannot progress satisfactorily in the regular courses provided at the school. Educable deaf-blind children of California are enrolled at this school. To be admitted, the visual and hearing loss of the child must be to an extent as to make the child incapable of learning in a special class for either the visually handicapped or the deaf. Admission is on a trial basis and a child must make consistent and continued progress each year.

Apparently three trends in population are developing: 1) The public schools provide for the more capable blind children with the less capable being referred to this residential school. 2) After

two or three years of unsuccessful trial in public school, children are referred to the California School for the Blind. 3) Some of those children who have been enrolled in an adequate elementary school program are applying for admission when there are no resources available for a high school program locally.

C. Reader Service for Blind College Students

During the fiscal year 1963-64, \$24,882.75 provided reader services to 83 blind college students, of whom 25 were graduate students and the remainder pursued undergraduate studies. As of January 1, 1965, 76 students were participating in this program. Of these, 21 were graduate students. To maintain the level of reader service prescribed in the original intent of the Code, larger appropriations will be necessary to meet the rising costs of reader services.

D. Visually Handicapped Pupils Enrolled in Public Schools

The Bureau of Special Education reports 2,374 blind and partially seeing pupils attending public schools in 1963-64. This compares with 2,201 in 1962-63.

Of the 2,374 attending public schools in 1963-64, 1,609 were registered with the American Printing House for the Blind for the federal quota allocation provided under Public Law 84-922. This compares with 1,521 in 1962-63. The increase in registration results not only from the increase in the total school enrollment but from efforts of staff to improve the procedures for reporting for registration.

There continues to be need for school districts charged under Education Code Section 11903 with providing for the testing of sight of each pupil enrolled in the schools of the district to do a better job identifying visually handicapped pupils in need of special education provisions. According to information provided by district and county superintendents of schools, 1,621 pupils are functioning in schools as partially seeing pupils. Nationally it has been estimated that .06 percent of the school population needs special education provisions for the partially seeing. This would seemingly indicate that in California there should be 2,540 rather than 1,621 pupils identified and being served in special education programs for the partially seeing.

Orientation and Mobility Training

Alameda County is in the second year of its three-year project made possible by a United States Office of Vocational Rehabilitation grant to study the possibilities of orientation and mobility training for blind pupils enrolled in public school programs. Evidence is accumulating that such training should be a part of the public school program for the education of blind pupils and that there are

problems including those of financial support that will require legislative attention if the public schools are to make orientation and mobility training a part of the public school program for blind students.

California State College at Los Angeles has requested and secured a one-year planning grant to ascertain the needs visually handicapped youth have for orientation and mobility training in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. This study will supplement that of Alameda County in spelling out the parameters of the problem facing the statewide community.

San Francisco State College in conjunction with the regional office of Vocational Rehabilitation has completed a request for a project grant looking to the establishment of a training center at the college to prepare persons to offer instruction in orientation and mobility training in public school programs for the blind. Such a center could supply the demands for such personnel on the West Coast and eliminate the necessity to travel to the Midwest or the East for such preparation.

Central Clearinghouse-Depository for the Visually Handicapped

Progress is being made in the establishment of a central clearinghouse-depository for the visually handicapped. As steps were getting underway last year to secure staff, quarters, and equipment, it developed that there was a question as to the legality of financing it out of funds authorized for providing readers for the blind and other services specified in Education Code Section 18106. As a result, all activity was discontinued until legislation could be secured to remove any question on the matter. The needed legislative change was provided in 1964. As a result, a consultant has recently been assigned to be in charge of the clearinghouse-depository operation. A secretary has been secured and interviews are underway for a stock clerk. Space has been assigned on the sixth floor within the Department of Education building for this operation. Equipment and furnishings have been ordered and a fair amount is being delivered. A fairly substantial amount of specialized materials, equipment, and tangible apparatus for the visually handicapped is already on hand for incorporating in the emerging central clearinghouse-depository operation. The picture is now very definitely looking up for this long-awaited program and service needed by visually handicapped children enrolled in the public schools of California.

Preparation of Teachers of the Visually Handicapped

The current need for teachers of the visually handicapped is not being met by the two accredited teacher preparation programs in California, namely, San Francisco State College and California State College at Los Angeles. The former does have a full-time professor while the latter, namely California State College in

Los Angeles, does not. A full-time professor in the area of the visually handicapped should be provided for the California State College at Los Angeles to stimulate recruitment and coordinate the entire program of professional preparation in the area of the visually handicapped.

The need for teachers of the visually handicapped over the next decade is expected to increase substantially. Currently there are 366 teachers of the visually handicapped; five years hence the number required is expected to reach 427; ten years hence the number needed is expected to reach 500. The foregoing need is anticipated as a result of the increase in school enrollment expected over the next decade. An additional number of teachers will need to be prepared to offset the attrition that normally occurs. Taking all factors into consideration, 33 to 38 new teachers will need to be prepared annually over the next ten-year period.

Over the past decade many of those taking preparation to teach visually handicapped pupils have come from regular classroom teaching. Many such teachers have proved to be outstanding teachers of the visually handicapped. Under the present credential requirements this source will be substantially restricted because of the requirement that they complete work for an academic major as well as get the necessary specialized preparation to teach the visually handicapped. The requirement that the academic major be secured will discourage many from seeking careers in teaching the visually handicapped.

It is felt that the requirement for the academic major should be waived by the Legislature for regular teachers holding regular teaching credentials who would like to take specialized preparation to teach exceptional children. Getting the specialized preparation entails an additional year of work. If the academic major must also be required, two or more years of added work will often be at issue. Most regular teachers will not be able to devote so much time and money to qualifying to teach the visually handicapped if two years or more of additional preparation is entailed.

E. California State Library - Books for the Blind

At the end of the year there were 3,957 active borrowers, an increase of 178 since last year.

During the calendar year 1964, there was an overall increase of slightly under 1% in the circulation of Braille, Moon type and Talking Book records. A total of 17,749 volumes in Braille and Moon type and a total of 160,544 containers of Talking Book records were circulated making a grand total of 178,293 volumes and containers.

The circulation of Moon type was discontinued on July 1, 1964 and the 13 remaining Moon readers were transferred to the Library

of Congress for service. This led to a decrease in the percentage of books in embossed types circulated during the calendar year of 1964. The Talking Book circulation increased by 4%.

The California State Library, one of the largest libraries for the blind, has not had the funds to give an important service now given by many regional libraries for the blind. This serious gap is a lending service of books on tape. The Library of Congress has now approximately 2,500 titles on tape. Unavailable on regular talking book records they are titles which are in much demand by college students and the more educated adult readers. The Library of Congress will furnish the State Library with submasters of these titles and all those which they produce in the future. The submasters must be stored and duplicated for circulation. Funds are needed for staff, blank tapes, mailing containers, tape duplicator and tape recorder to initiate the service so greatly needed in this state.

II. Training, Vocational Rehabilitation and Work Opportunities

A. Field Rehabilitation Services for the Adult Blind

This program offers counseling, guidance and instruction to adult blind and deaf-blind persons on an individual basis. The purpose is to assist the individual in his physical and psychological adjustment and orientation to his disability.

Staffing for this program consists of twenty-three teacher-counselors in the field, directed by two assistant supervisors and one state supervisor. During the period October 1963-64 teacher-counselors made a total of 17,623 home calls and of this number 1,146 were made upon persons not previously known to this unit. The monthly average of active clients was 517. A breakdown of areas of services offered show counseling 9,523; orientation 4,783; Braille lessons 7,478; typing 1,080.

Despite these figures, staffing does not permit offering services to blind adults on a statewide basis. Some measure of service has been offered in twenty-five counties but realistically 37 counties are receiving no service or minimal service as it has been necessary to assign present staff members to more populous areas.

The Field Rehabilitation Services is presently unable to meet the demands for service throughout the State. It is estimated that the blind population increases by 2,950 persons each year, and that 90% of these persons are in need of orientation and adjustment services. There is an obvious need for additional staff to provide a statewide service.

During 1964, a teacher-counselor was assigned to San Fernando Valley to give service to a large population in an area previously

uncovered. Teacher-Counselors were housed in the district and branch offices of the Department of Rehabilitation and were furnished equipment and clerical assistance. Plans are being made to make medical and psychological consultation available to them.

A two year graduate training course for teacher-counselors was developed at Los Angeles State College and will begin in the Spring of 1965. Special training was provided to supervising teacher-counselors at university institutes.

B. Orientation Center for the Blind

The major development for 1964 was the establishment of the beautiful new California Orientation Center for the Blind in Albany. This modern rehabilitation center, designed for comprehensive orientation training, is one of the finest facilities of its kind to be found anywhere. Included are dormitories, a large dining room, a modern kitchen, a gymnasium, library, classrooms, patio and recreational areas, etc.

The new Center will make it possible to double the annual number of blind persons served. With an average of forty in residence at all times, almost one hundred blind persons will benefit from this intensive orientation program each year.

During calendar year 1964, there were 19 students newly enrolled. Of the 25 students whose training was terminated, 10 are taking further training; 4 are employed; 2 are housewives; 1 terminated training because of illness; 2 are unemployed; and 5 are in unknown status.

The objective of the Center is to help the blind client to cope with the variety of physical, psychological and social problems which confound the newly blinded person in a sighted world. Orientation training provides compensating techniques to overcome these problems. Training is provided in foot travel, communications (typing, Braille, longhand, etc.), homemaking, daily living skills, shop operations, physical conditioning. Along every step of the way, the blind person is counseled and encouraged towards self-confidence and independence.

With appropriate follow-up vocational rehabilitation services through other programs of the Division, many blind persons are able to enter competitive employment in a wide range of occupations. Others are enabled to lead happier and more effective lives as homemakers and family members.

C. Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Vocational rehabilitation of the blind in California is integrated with the program of services to all handicapped people. Blind clients thus receive the same services as do other clients,

but because of special problems they are served by vocational rehabilitation counselors who specialize in service to the blind. As of June 30, 1964, there were 820 blind clients in the vocational rehabilitation caseload. Another 139 clients were rehabilitated into employment during the year. The Vocational Rehabilitation Administration estimates that each year an additional 729 newly blinded persons in California need vocational rehabilitation service.

The blind are prepared for all types of employment. About one-third are trained for managerial and professional work; 22% for vending stand, snack bar or cafeteria operation; 14% are prepared for clerical or sales work; 11% for skilled work; and another 11% for semi-skilled work.

Our rehabilitation counselors for the blind are pushing ahead into more technical fields to make possible more jobs for blind clients. For example, there are now in the State three "seeing aid probes" (a recent invention of the Bell Telephone Company, making it possible for blind PBX operators to operate one and two position switchboards). One is located in the Goodwill Industries facility in Los Angeles; a second in the San Francisco Lighthouse for the Blind; and a third has been installed in the Orientation Center for the Blind in Albany.

Another excellent example of new technical vocational training is computer programming. A one year course for the blind is about to be inaugurated at the University of Southern California. Our rehabilitation counselors for the blind will be able to direct ten qualified blind candidates a year to this exciting new field.

Today, vocational rehabilitation counselors for the blind are stationed in every district office in the Department. They work closely with other professional personnel from the Field Rehabilitation Services, the Orientation Center, the Business Enterprise Program, and workshops for the blind to provide prompt, coordinated service to those blind persons with potential for employment.

D. California Industries for the Blind

With three manufacturing plants located in Berkeley, San Diego and Los Angeles, the California Industries for the Blind employs 200 blind and other handicapped persons and produces and sells in excess of 2.5 million dollars in merchandise each year. It is one of the largest of the blind industries in the nation.

Since entering the Department of Rehabilitation, the purpose and goals for California Industries for the Blind have been considerably broadened in scope to enable the Industries to work in close cooperation with, and more fully utilize, the allied services within the Division of Rehabilitation of the Blind and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The three manufacturing

facilities of California Industries for the Blind, in addition to employment of the blind, have now become a valuable tool, available to all services, in evaluating, training and placement of rehabilitation clients.

All production of California Industries for the Blind falls within one of the nine major manufacturing departments of Machine Sewing, Textiles, Packaging, Mattresses, Brushes, Brooms, Belts and Sub-contract. In spite of the fact that the Industries use modern manufacturing methods and equipment, the acceptance of each item to be made is dependent upon the amount of labor it will make available to the blind. At the present time plans are underway to expand the emphasis on blind labor that exists in the three factories into sales activity. This will serve to open additional opportunities for the employment of blind clients as well as raise the prestige of blind-made products throughout the State of California.

The products of California Industries for the Blind are sold to customers within the Federal and State governments and other political subdivisions in larger and ever-increasing quantities. Both heavy-duty janitorial items as well as a full line of household cleaning implements are shipped throughout the Pacific Area to the Armed Forces installations for use and for re-sale in Commissary stores and Base Exchanges.

Recent new additions to the product line have opened additional work for production personnel and have substantially increased the prestige of blind-made products made by California Industries for the Blind.

The new Automotive Seat Belt is now purchased by all major agencies with the Federal Government and the State of California. It is one of the few belts accepted and installed in Highway Patrol cars.

Sub-contract work is now approached on a much higher level than was previously possible. A new contract to manufacture a full department store line of household draperies for one of the nation's largest textile manufacturers is receiving national attention.

During 1964, the management brought about significant improvements in working conditions. For the first time, workers were granted holiday pay and a minimum wage of \$1.25 per hour was established in all three Centers.

Continued refinements of policies, working conditions, production and products are scheduled to further expand the services offered by California Industries for the Blind.

E. Business Enterprise Program

Under Federal and state laws, the Department is the official licensing agency for vending stands to be operated by blind persons

in public buildings. Business enterprise officers assist trained blind clients in this program by providing guidance and equipment to help them become established in suitable business enterprises. The business enterprise officers are also active in promoting new locations for these installations.

As of June 30, 1964 there were a record 238 blind clients operating vending stands, snack bars, and cafeterias in public buildings and private industrial plants throughout the State. These installations showed a total gross sales of \$7,000,000 for the year. The average annual take home pay of the operators was \$6,168 per year. Many of these blind operators were former recipients of Aid to the Blind. If they were totally dependent on public assistance today, the cost to the taxpayers would be approximately \$423,500 per year (based on an average Blind Aid grant--including administrative costs--of \$1,750 per year per person). This would also be a continuous cost year after year. In addition, the operators employed 417 helpers, of whom 73 were blind and 93 had other known disabilities.

The program also operates two training centers in Los Angeles and Sacramento where blind and other handicapped clients are prepared for work in the food service industry. Some of the trainees go to work in the program's cafeterias and snack bars. Many others become employed in private food service establishments.

F. Opportunity Work Centers

With three sheltered workshops, located in Berkeley, Los Angeles, and San Jose, the Opportunity Work Center program provides training and employment to some 109 blind and other handicapped persons.

The Centers make possible the employment of persons who, because of their multiple handicaps, are not able to work in full time competitive employment or production workshops.

The work day in the shops averages 6-1/2 hours. Sub-contracts are secured from private industry. This provides a variety of tasks which require different skills. Many of the workers are thus being trained to qualify for jobs in private industry or for full-time production work at the California Industries for the Blind.

The Centers have been successful in securing many repeat orders because of the high quality of work done. As a result, the worker payroll has more than tripled in the last four years. Total payments in wages to workers during 1964 amounted to \$115,000.

III. Social Welfare Programs for the Blind

- A. California has three social welfare programs for the blind: Aid to Needy Blind; Aid to Potentially Self-supporting Blind Residents; and Prevention of Blindness. The first two programs are administered by the State's 58 county welfare departments and supervised by the

State Department of Social Welfare. The Prevention of Blindness Program is directly administered by the State with the cooperation of the counties.

1. Aid to the Blind

Aid to the Blind provides financial assistance and other services to those blind persons who do not have sufficient income or other resources with which to purchase the necessities of life. Most of these persons have been self-supporting, sighted men and women and blindness has occurred at an age when remunerative employment has already ceased. In August 1964, 12,276 persons received an average grant of \$117.34 and an average medical care payment of \$17.89.

2. Aid to Potentially Self-Supporting Blind Residents

This program provides financial assistance, with liberal property and income exemptions as incentives to those needy blind persons who have a plan to achieve self-support so they may become independent of public assistance. In June 1964, 60 persons received an average grant of \$147.38 and an average medical care payment of \$16.12.

On July 1, 1963, a provision in the Federal Social Security Act became effective which permitted an exemption of additional income and resources for those recipients of Aid to the Blind who have a plan for self-support, for a 12-month period. Full Federal financial participation was thus made possible for most recipients who would otherwise be receiving APSB during the fiscal year. Thus, the APSB caseload dropped from 276 in June 1963, to 111 in August 1964. Public Law 88-650 will extend the 12-month period in these cases to a 36-month period.

3. Prevention of Blindness

The Prevention of Blindness program provides medical eye care for applicants and recipients of Aid to the Blind when such care might restore vision or prevent further loss of sight. The program is primarily a surgical one, covering all the expenses incident to such care and including the surgeon's fee and the cost of hospitalization.

During the 1963-64 fiscal year, some 695 surgeries were performed. It is expected that about 95 percent of these surgeries will result in improved vision; and in about 87 percent of the cases, vision will be so greatly improved that the patients will no longer be eligible for Aid to the Blind. In the previous fiscal year, 614 eye surgeries were performed. The number of blind recipients for whom eyesight was restored in 1963-64 was greater than any other year.

Eye surgery is also available to recipients of Old Age Security and to Aid to Disabled. These cases are processed under the Prevention of Blindness program but are financed from Public Assistance Medical Care funds.

4. Revolving Loan Fund

In 1963 the Legislature established a Revolving Loan Fund to be administered by the Department, to make loans to recipients of Aid to the Blind to enable them to become established in business, profession, or other gainful employment. Criteria were established and a loan fund advisory committee constituted. There have been three loans approved during the year, involving \$7,200. Three applications were denied. Four applications were withdrawn; two because of health reasons, one due to the refusal of a proprietor to sell his business to the blind applicant, and one because the need for the loan was met by Vocational Rehabilitation Services. One payment has already been received from the first application approved.

Of the applications approved, one loan was for the establishment of a card advertising business; one for the establishment of a produce business; and the third for the expansion of a telephone answering service.

B. Summary of Achievements in Welfare Program for Blind Citizens During the Year

1. Amount of Grant

During the year minimum and maximum limitations on grants plus nonexempt income were increased from \$124 to \$125 per month and from \$174 to \$175 per month respectively. These increases resulted from a \$1 cost-of-living increase. The minimum and maximum limitations on grants plus nonexempt income will be increased from \$125 per month and \$175 per month to \$127 and \$177, resulting from a \$2 cost-of-living increase effective December 1, 1964.

2. Legislation and Caseload Trends

During the fiscal year some 14 new laws, including two omnibus bills became effective, making some 29 direct changes in the Aid to the Blind laws. Among the most significant legislative changes are: (1) abolition of durational residence; (2) provision for the payment of attendant services; (3) payment of the cost of inpatient medical care for those blind persons under 65 years of age; (4) prohibition against the taking of liens for the cost of hospitalization; and (5) the exemption of additional amounts of income and resources for those Aid to the Blind recipients having a plan of self-support.

The abolition of durational residence ~~requirements~~, effective January 1, 1964. From December 1963 through June 1964, the statewide caseload increased by only 402 or an average of 67 cases per month. Most of the new cases added represented those blind persons already living in the State but who were waiting for the previously required five years of durational residence to elapse. Thus the impact of the repeal of durational residence on the caseload has been small. It is anticipated that the AB caseload will resume its downward trend early in the forthcoming fiscal year.

The provision for payment of attendant services resulted in grants in June covering 1,344 recipient months, of which 965 represented need within the statutory maximum and 379 represented need for attendant services which exceeded the statutory maximum. This provision has enabled many blind persons to remain in their own homes instead of being compelled to enter the more expensive out-of-home care medical facilities.

3. Provision of Services

The past year was devoted to the initiation and "tooling up" of implementation of the Service Amendments to the Social Security Act. As the provision of services is expanded, and the sight-restoration and economic-rehabilitation aspects of the Social Welfare Programs for the Blind are continued, the self-support and self-care objectives of these programs will be even more fully realized.

C. Recommendations

1. Through legislative action (Chapter 510, Statutes of 1963), Section 3013 was added to the Aid to the Blind Law to provide inpatient care for recipients under 65 years of age, to be paid for through the Public Assistance Medical Care fund. This has meant that recipients are requiring and receiving more comprehensive medical care through the medical care fund. The per capita cost has increased above the \$15 per month presently allocated as a premium deposit per recipient, the cost being \$17.89 in the month of August 1964. It seems evident that the 1964-65 fiscal year average will be well above the \$15 premium deposit. Consideration could be given to increasing the premium deposit from \$15 to \$20 to more realistically reflect the probable cost of medical care in Aid to the Blind.
2. Because of the 30-day and \$2,000 corridors before private hospital care can be provided recipients under the Medical Assistance for the Aged program, there is discrimination against hospital vendors and the free choice of physician concept is also restricted. Consideration should be given to the elimination of the time and dollar corridors for voluntary and proprietary hospital care.

3. Statutory authority could be provided in order to accept the applicant's certified statements as to eligibility, supported by readily available documentation in arriving at determination of eligibility, in lieu of the present detailed investigation of each case. This would expedite and simplify the administration of the program and permit more time to be given to the provision of needed services. In 1950 Section 3081 provided that the applicant's sworn statement in his application shall constitute prima facie evidence of the facts stated, except with respect to degree of blindness and residence. This section remained in the law until 1963 when, because of a complete rewrite of the application process, it was not transferred to the general provisions governing the application process.

IV. Prevention of Blindness Program

- A. The State Department of Public Health maintains at the direction of the legislature a statewide program for the prevention of blindness. Opportunities for saving vision of California's citizens lie equally in:
 1. Preventing the occurrence of blinding diseases, conditions, or events. Examples of this type of prevention are silver nitrate or other prophylaxis against eye disease in babies which result from venereal infection in the mother; safeguarding pregnant women from various diseases, particularly measles; progress against the occurrence of premature birth with its high risk of significant birth defects; and prevention of childhood eye accidents.
 2. Preventing or lessening the effects of diseases and conditions which cause eye disorders and loss of vision. Examples of this type of prevention are the earliest possible discovery of glaucoma and amblyopia, important causes of blindness. Medical or surgical procedures can be effective in reversing or halting progress toward blindness if these conditions are found early.
- B. Substantial progress has been made in blindness prevention by improved knowledge and more aggressive public health practices:
 1. Controlling causes of blindness, e.g. no blindness due to Retrolental Fibroplasia has been reported since 1960. The epidemic in the early 1950's blinded 685 babies, now all children of school age and requiring special services.
 2. Investigating the amount, chief causes, and distribution of blindness in the population.
 3. Demonstrating and evaluating the means for early detection of glaucoma.

4. Organizing procedures for earlier detection of blinding conditions so that wider application is possible. In four well-operated glaucoma detection programs some 30,000 adults have been tested, while six additional communities are in some stage of planning a program. More than 500 previously unknown cases of glaucoma are now under treatment.
 5. Demonstrating patterns for vision testing of preschool children. Approximately 60,000 children are being tested annually for vision disorders at an age when correction to prevent blindness is possible. It is estimated that an additional 2,000 youngsters will have an opportunity to start school with two good eyes.
- C. The State Department of Public Health has emphasized in its program during the past year these aspects of its responsibility in prevention of blindness :
1. Providing specialized help to local agencies and groups planning community programs. Local health departments and professional groups, volunteer groups, voluntary agencies, schools, and service organizations are now active in many areas in California. Their common needs are consultation, assistance in establishing standards, help in developing program aids and educational materials, and specialized training courses.
 2. Investigating methods and practicable means for achieving broader development of community programs to prevent blindness. Numerous projects and studies are part of this aspect of the State's program including evaluation of vision testing methods and devices for use in physicians' offices and stimulation of broader training opportunities. Further efforts are needed for all age groups, e.g.: 350,000 children enter school each year in California only a small proportion of whom have eye examinations; 30% of the State population is over age 45, the years of greatly increased risk of blindness and dependency.
 3. Continuing investigation into the causes of blindness in the population to detect shifts in the causes and permit changing emphasis in preventive programs. For example, about one-fourth of the blindness in children is congenital resulting from prematurity and anomalies at birth due to maternal infections at critical periods during gestation; about one-fourth of adult blindness is due to conditions associated with age such as retinal degeneration, arteriosclerotic disease and diabetes, which are on the increase. Many of these diseases must be considered preventable, while the effects of others can be lessened by earlier detection, proper treatment, and good supervision. Coordination with preventive and control programs throughout the Department, e.g. heart disease, diabetes, maternal health, is important.

NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

In the coming year the Coordinating Council on State Programs for the Blind and its working committee will give attention to these major needs in the State:

1. Continuing study of the uses, problems, and management of blindness reporting and the maintenance of a register.
2. Increased funds for reader services for blind college students.
3. Changes in credential requirements in order to permit accelerated recruitment of special teachers.
4. Obtaining funds to initiate taped book service from the State Library.
5. Expansion of teacher-counselor service for the adult blind in order to serve the entire State.
6. Raise in Public Assistance Medical Care Fund to more realistically reflect the probable cost of medical care.
7. Elimination of restrictions to free choice of physician and hospital.
8. Changes in the application procedure for aid to the blind to expedite program administration and provision of needed services.